

To: Chief Mike Richwine
From: Mark Hogan
Date: March 16, 2008
Re: River and Flood Water Rescue Operations

This is a proposal to rewrite the River and Flood Water Rescue course. The intent of this proposal is to expand the course from its current 2 day/16 hour format to a 4 day/32 hour format. The current course consists of a very brief outline with no Student text recommended, no Instructor Guide and no AV support. This proposed rewrite would include a recommended textbook, Instructor Guides and PowerPoint presentations to support the course content. The course would also be compliant with NFPA Standards 1670 Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Rescue Incidents and 1006 Standard for rescue Technician Professional Qualifications for the Technician level in Surface Water Rescue. The following information validates the need for fulfilling this proposal.

I have been an Instructor Trainer and have developed curriculum for Rescue 3 International for the past 20 years and I have an understanding of what it takes to produce a quality training program that meets the needs of the Fire Service. I am also a State Fire Training (SFT) accredited River and Flood Water Rescue Instructor and I am aware of the fact that the current River and Flood Water Rescue course is inadequate. As an active water rescue professional I have responded to numerous river and flood incidents including river rescues in Central and Northern California, floods in Napa, along the San Joaquin River and Delta and in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina; all of which required skilled and knowledgeable rescuers. I am keenly aware that water rescue incidents are low frequency/high risk emergencies and account for numerous firefighter deaths and near misses each year. With this in mind, a quality training program with competent instruction is the best way to reduce the number of firefighter fatalities when dealing with water rescue incidents.

The current River and Flood Water Rescue outline is somewhat ambiguous and reflects few of the knowledge and skills requirements facing today's water rescuer. Additionally, a simple outline does not give the instructor enough information or support to conduct a quality course (The current course information can be found on page 60 of STF Course Information and Required Materials Manual). The proposed course will allow SFT to offer a course that is well defined, well supported with course materials, consistent with current rescue practices and specifically designed for the California Fire Service. It includes a balance of pertinent information through lecture and video and the needed time to develop rescue skills through manipulative training and scenario practice.

The new course would follow current trends in SFT and in the rescue community. The course would use River Rescue by Slim Ray and Les Bechdel as a textbook. This book has excellent information, describes nearly all of the rescue evolutions taught in the course and is readily available through several sources at a reasonable cost. Also in

keeping with SFT trends, Low Angle Rope Rescue would be a prerequisite to River and Flood Water Rescue; this reduces the amount of time needed to teach the course and standardizes the rope rescue skills across the rescue spectrum. The Instructor Guide, Power Point Presentations, Student Information Sheets and Task Book will be written by a team of experienced instructors with no need for support from SFT other than proofreading and minor layout assistance.

As with other SFT rescue courses, an "Awareness" level course could easily be adopted using appropriate information and skills from the River and Flood Water Rescue course. This also aligns well with NFPA Standard 1670 and 1006. Additionally, a "Refresher" course could be adopted to meet the continuing education needs of the "Swiftwater Rescue Teams" that are identified as Office of Emergency Services resources. The River and Flood Water Rescue course could easily be formatted in a modular fashion to meet several needs.

In closing, this is an excellent opportunity to improve the River and Flood Water Rescue course by making it current, comprehensive and well supported. Several of my rescue colleagues support this proposal (See list below) and are eager to see an improved SFT curriculum. The best tool available to counter firefighter deaths and near misses is quality education and training and the new course will meet those needs.

Respectfully,
Mark Hogan
Firefighter
Fremont Fire Department

NAMES AND AGENCIES OF THOSE WHO SUPPORT THIS PROJECT

William Beltz	Fremont Fire Department
Tom Anderson	San Ramon Valley Fire District
Greg Bauman	Ripon Consolidated Fire Protection District
Ken Frye	Ben Lomond Fire Protection District